

## **Steps for Overcoming Your Insomnia**

- 1 Select a standard wake-up time.** Use it every day regardless of the sleep you obtain on any particular night.
- 2 Use the bed only for sleeping.** Do not read, eat, watch TV, etc in bed. Sexual activity is the only exception.
- 3 Get up when you can't sleep.** When you are unable to sleep for about 20 to 30 minutes, get up, go to another room, and engage in non-stimulating activities by a dim light, such as light reading, boring television, or listening to calming music, until you feel sleepy enough to return to bed. When you return to bed, get up again if sleep does not come on quickly. Do not use the computer at night.
- 4 Don't worry, plan, problem solve, etc. in bed.** If such mental activities come on automatically in bed, get up and stay up until your mind quiets and you feel sleepy. When you return to bed, get up again if sleep does not come on quickly.
- 5 Avoid daytime napping.** Napping, particularly in the late afternoon or early evening, may interfere with your night's sleep.
- 6 Go to bed when you are sleepy.** Sleep has a hard time catching you if you do not feel sleepy.
- 7 Don't spend excessive amounts of time in bed.** Often your sleep just becomes more fragmented the longer you spend in bed. So, it best to keep your time in bed closer to what you actually sleep night to night.

### Other helpful practices

1. Limit caffeine & alcohol.
2. Exercise regularly, but not close to bedtime.
3. Schedule quiet time before bed.
4. Don't watch the clock during the night.
5. Keep bedroom quiet, dark, and cool.
6. Try a light bedtime snack such as milk, peanut butter, or cheese.
7. If you are feeling worried or down a good portion of the time, talk to your health care provider about possible treatment options to address these issues as they may interfere with your goals for better sleep.

**Above all, be patient! Your sleep problem developed over time so it will take some time to return to a more normal sleep pattern. By following the suggestions in this handout, you should see gradual sleep improvements. If you would like additional information about the strategies discussed in this handout, please see the following self-help books:**

Edinger, J. & Carney, C. (2008). *Overcoming Insomnia: A Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Approach Workbook*. Oxford: New York.

Carney, C., & Manber, R. (2009). *Quiet Your Mind and Get to Sleep: Solutions to Insomnia for Those with Depression, Anxiety, or Chronic Pain*. New Harbinger: California.

